

Greenbrier Independent.

THURSDAY, NOV. 30TH, 1899.

LOCAL MATTERS.

BRING your produce to J. A. Pulliam.

READ Duffy, Dwyer & Co.'s new advertisement in another column.

BRICK-LAYERS WANTED.—Apply to Thos. Luke, West Virginia Pulp and Paper Co., Covington, Va.

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CHAS. F. SCHILPP, Rector.

A Comrade's Tribute to Capt. McNeel.

WACO, TEXAS, Nov. 6th, 1899.

Editor Greenbrier Independent:

My brother, the Rev. Geo. T. Lyle, kindly sent me a copy of the INDEPENDENT of October 26th, containing a notice of the death of Captain Wm. L. McNeel, of Pocahontas county. I ask space to pay a tribute to the memory of a comrade whom all of Wm. L. Jackson's cavalry brigade greatly loved and admired. He had a heart as big as a house, and, as an officer, he had skill and courage excelled by few.

We first met when the 19th Virginia cavalry regiment, in which he was a captain, was organized in the spring of 1863 at Frankford. He was then a man in middle life, myself in the first years of manhood, yet a friendship sprung up that death alone could end. Such was the charm of the man that he won and held the love and esteem of young and old.

The brigade spent the balance of 1863 in Pocahontas county guarding that portion of the Confederate lines, and it was my good fortune frequently to enjoy the hospitality of his home. His

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Space does not permit me to enter upon an extended account of his military career. It is enough to say that he was ever faithful and true, and his superior officers relied upon him with a confidence that was blindfold. He was the best captain in the brigade, and it had many splendid men of that rank.

During Early's campaign in the Valley of Virginia in 1864, he, much of the time, commanded the regiment as senior captain. And he handled it with a skill that ought to have been rewarded by promotion.

One time the brigade was tolling Averell with a superior force from Bunker Hill to Winchester for our infantry to attend to and rebuke his impertinence. It met Ramsuer's division a few miles north of Winchester and pulled out to the right and left to give it place. The infantry went at the enemy end-foremost, instead of deployed in line, and a part of it was thrown into confusion, and

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"Great heavens! that will never do! Follow me, 19th Virginia!" shouted Captain McNeel. The 19th followed him, (it would have gone with him anywhere,) the enemy's cavalry were driven back, and each trooper returned with a rescued Confederate on his crupper.—Ramsuer's division ever after that met the brigade with gifts instead of jibes, such as "buttermilk rangers!"

The opposing armies were in line near Berryville, Virginia, the latter part of August or the first part of September, 1864, and the skirmishers daily entertained each other. The 19th Virginia cavalry under command of Captain McNeel, held an important road that ran perpendicular to the lines, and was a mile or more to the left of the balance of the brigade. As I approached the regiment one evening, bearing a message from General Wm. L. Jackson to

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als.— heard just beyond in the direction of
Nov. of the enemy, and the earth shook and
at the trembled. Soon the head of a column
of Yankee troopers appeared on the
Sny- road in full charge upon our ranks.—
y B. They came bravely on, but only a few
ounts of their riderless horses got through.
dis- The 19th never flinched at their appall-
con- ing array, but poured in a deadly volley
that stampeded them, leaving Lieuten-
ant Colonel Bell, their leader, and a
number of his followers dead on the
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The repulse of this attack has been
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The repulse of this attack has been claimed by others, among them Major Harry Gilmore of the Maryland Battalion, but Captain McNeel did it.— That the truth of history may be vindicated and credit go where it belongs is my excuse for obtruding self as an eye witness into this sketch.

Captain McNeel was full of humor and enjoyed a joke to his utmost capacity. Early's army was moving down the pike toward Shepherdstown, and Captain McNeel, in command of the 19th, lead the advance. About ten miles south of Shepherdstown he encountered Sheridan's famous cavalry corps, who were taken by surprise and put up a bold fight to gain time to get their camp equipage to the rear. The skirmish was getting lively and "Old Jube" rode forward and asked the Captain what was before him.

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"From the way they are pressing us, I think they are pretty strong, General," replied the Captain.

"By —," drawled Old Jube, "may be they think there ain't much in front of them." Captain McNeel enjoyed telling this.

But enough, lest I impose on your generosity, Mr. Editor, and overstep all bounds and with the garrulity of an old soldier consume space in recounting the Captain's exploits on the scout, on the march and in the skirmish and the battle during the two eventful years from the spring of 1863 to the surrender in 1865.

JOHN N. LYLE.

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